

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.863
25 January 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 25 January 2001, at 10.15 a.m.

President:

Mr. Christopher Westdal

(Canada)

GE.01-60269 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 863rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset to extend a particularly warm welcome, on behalf of all of us, to the visiting Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Inamul Haque. His presence among us today demonstrates the long-lasting commitment of his Government to our common goals and the continued importance that it clearly attaches to the work of the Conference.

The Foreign Secretary is on my list of speakers today and he is joined on that list by the representative of Latvia. Should others wish to add their names to the list, please inform the secretariat.

I shall proceed with that list then. It is a great pleasure for me to invite the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan to address us.

Mr. HAQUE (Pakistan): I should perhaps begin by thanking the distinguished representative of Latvia for having joined me this morning in addressing the Conference, for I would otherwise have been a very lonely voice in this august forum.

Mr. President, may I begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You have assumed this office at a very challenging moment. Given Canada's commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, and your experience and diplomatic skills, we are confident that your stewardship will make a significant contribution to the work of the Conference.

The delegation of Pakistan also acknowledges the invaluable contributions made by your predecessors in promoting agreement on the Conference's work programme, especially by two distinguished representatives from the Group of 21, Ambassador Dembri of Algeria and Ambassador Amorim of Brazil.

Together with the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council, the Conference on Disarmament is an indispensable multilateral forum for the promotion and preservation of international peace and security. It has the important mandate of working on the elimination of the most dangerous weapons, including nuclear weapons, and the reduction and control of armaments globally. Bilateral or multilateral endeavours outside the Conference on Disarmament do not legally or politically constrain or restrict the Conference's mandate as the sole disarmament negotiating forum. As such, and bound by the United Nations Charter's principles of sovereign equality, the Conference on Disarmament must be responsive to the security needs of all States, large or small. In practical terms, this means that all States and peoples have the right to be free from the threat of aggression, destruction or annihilation. The realization of this universal goal is the great challenge to which the international community, and especially this august body, must respond with vision and courage.

The current session of the Conference opens during a leadership transition in the world's leading Power. Pakistan welcomes the assumption of office by President George W. Bush. We are reassured that his Administration's external and defence affairs have been entrusted to people with vast experience and proven capability. Their decisions and actions will inevitably have

(Mr. Haque, Pakistan)

major implications for the process of arms control and disarmament, including for the work of this Conference. Thirty years ago, the United States and the erstwhile Soviet Union reached the conclusion that the deployment of anti-ballistic missile defences would erode the stability of mutual strategic deterrence between them. This conclusion, reflected in the ABM Treaty, is now being questioned, in part because of the improvements in ballistic missile defence capabilities and the collapse of the bipolar world. The issue requires careful examination, in view of the major implications it is likely to have not only for strategic stability between the parties to the ABM Treaty but for other countries and regions.

Most countries, and the international disarmament community, remain unconvinced that the abrogation or amendment of the ABM Treaty and the deployment of national missile defence (NMD) systems are the advisable course to enhance international or national security. If one or more States decide to create "shields" against ballistic missiles to protect their national territory, or that of their allies and clients, other States are likely to respond by improving and adding to their "lances". Missile defences, both national missile defence and theatre missile defence, could therefore heighten tensions between major Powers, jeopardize the global strategic balance and turn back the disarmament clock. A security environment in which only some are secure from the nuclear threat, while others confront a possibly heightened danger, will not contribute to global stability.

We, therefore, believe that, before irrevocable decisions are taken and actions initiated, it would be best to hold a thorough and inclusive debate on the rationale and the consequences of the deployment of ballistic missile defence systems, both at the strategic and the regional levels.

Mr. President, the concerns expressed about missile proliferation should be evaluated from an objective perspective and not from the discriminatory premise that some States have the right to develop, possess, deploy, and use ballistic and cruise missiles, while others, including those targeted by such missiles, must be prevented by all possible means, from acquiring them.

Thousands of long-range, medium-range and short-range missiles are already deployed by the major Powers and their allies. Even after the reductions envisaged under START II and a possible START III, the two major nuclear Powers will retain around 2,500 nuclear warheads each, deliverable by air, land and sea-based delivery systems. This would include missile-mounted nuclear weapons, which are held on high alert and would pose a major threat of a nuclear catastrophe. The first priority therefore should be to address this danger, and the best way of doing so would be first to de-alert and de-activate these weapons, and thereafter proceed to progressively deeper cuts towards the goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons agreed to by the five NPT nuclear-weapon States at the last NPT review conference.

Second, we need to address the underlying causes for the acquisition of missiles in other parts of the world. Regional missile development is largely an action-reaction process in an already charged security environment. Each regional situation may thus require a distinct approach which addresses the security concerns of the States involved. In some cases, the role of missiles, especially for countries which do not have access to advanced and unaffordable military aircraft, may be vital to their defensive strategy.

Third, the introduction of anti-ballistic missile systems into the military equation, at the global or regional level, is likely in itself to accelerate the qualitative improvement and quantitative deployment of "offensive" missiles. Thus, this apparent solution to the problem of missile proliferation may in fact aggravate the problem.

Restricted forums with one-dimensional agendas, like the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which operate on the basis of a selective and, therefore, a discriminatory approach, are unlikely to succeed in promoting comprehensive and durable solutions to the dangers that are posed by the growing role of missiles in the national defence strategies of both the major Powers and other countries. Nor can such a forum address the issue of the acquisition and deployment of anti-ballistic missiles. In our view, therefore, the Conference on Disarmament is an appropriate forum for a consideration of the multifaceted ramifications of the issue of missile and anti-missile systems for international and regional stability and security.

The Parties to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty are committed to using outer space for the benefit of all peoples, irrespective of the degree of their economic or scientific development. Outer space has been declared the province of all humankind. Today, there is heightened and legitimate concern that outer space could be further militarized through a proliferation of intelligence and communications assets. There is now, also, a real possibility of the actual deployment of space-based defensive and offensive weapons systems. It has thus become imperative for the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate legal and political instruments against the weaponization of outer space.

Mr. President, my delegation is encouraged by your sincere and energetic efforts to build consensus on a work programme for the Conference on Disarmament. Pakistan maintains a constructive and flexible approach on this issue. We hope that the Conference can agree on a work programme this year.

Pakistan welcomes the emerging consensus that the Conference on Disarmament should establish four ad hoc committees to deal with nuclear disarmament, fissile materials, prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances. We trust that the differences regarding the specific wording of the mandates of some of these committees will be resolved soon.

I wish to reiterate that Pakistan remains committed to negotiations on a fissile materials treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. We will seek to address and resolve some of the issues of unequal stockpiles within the framework of these negotiations. I should add that the evolution in south Asia's security environment will have a direct bearing on our position on this treaty and its various elements.

South Asia has been described as "the most dangerous place in the world". Pakistan wishes the region to be rid of this ominous appellation. We cannot, however, do it alone. South Asia can become a region of peace and progress through a commitment on the part of both India and Pakistan to resolve the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, which lies at the heart of the problems between the two countries, through peaceful negotiations based on the principles of international law, of the United Nations Charter and of the relevant resolutions of the

(Mr. Haque, Pakistan)

Security Council. India and Pakistan have, in the past, gone to war on this issue. We believe that, in the context of present day realities, it is essential to take steps to defuse tensions over Kashmir and to launch the process for a just and peaceful solution to the dispute.

Pakistan has made persistent efforts to promote this objective. The Chief Executive of Pakistan has offered to resume the dialogue with India at any time, at any level and at any place. In December 2000, Pakistan declared that it would unilaterally exercise maximum restraint along the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir. There is greater tranquillity today all along the line. This is recognized by India as well. Pakistan has also unilaterally withdrawn sizable forces from forward positions on the line of control.

India's announced suspension of military operations against the Kashmiri freedom fighters will be meaningful only if it is combined with a purposeful dialogue for the peaceful settlement of Jammu and Kashmir, an end to repression and violence against the Kashmiri people, reduction of Indian forces in Indian-occupied Kashmir, release of all detainees and respect for the fundamental rights of the Kashmiri people.

While unfortunately India has continued to avoid a dialogue with Pakistan and has sought to impose unacceptable preconditions on a resumption of dialogue, Pakistan has sought ways and means of promoting dialogue. In our statement of 2 December 2000, announcing maximum restraint on the line of control, we also proposed that the Executive Committee of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), the representative of the Kashmiri people, should be allowed to travel to Pakistan preparatory to a tripartite dialogue. We also suggested to India that it undertake similar consultations with the Executive Committee of APHC. We believe that discussions by APHC with Pakistan and India would help launch a process for a final settlement of the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. The Kashmiri people welcomed this proposal and the APHC leadership nominated a five-member delegation to visit Pakistan. Unfortunately, India has held up the process by seeking to determine the composition of the Kashmiri delegation through the stratagem of refusing travel documents to some of the Kashmiri leaders.

Pakistan hopes that the Indian Government will review its approach and allow the delegation nominated by APHC to visit Pakistan and will agree expeditiously to the resumption of a dialogue with Pakistan on Kashmir. It is only through a credible peace process and genuine reduction of repression by Indian security forces in Indian-occupied Kashmir that the Kashmiri people will be able to breathe in peace and decide their future in accordance with their own aspirations. We fear that, if not seized quickly, even this opportunity may be lost because of the approach and attitude of India.

Apart from the urgent action required to avoid conflict over Kashmir and to promote a peaceful solution to this long-standing dispute, it is essential to take steps to arrest nuclear and conventional arms build-up in south Asia. Instead of a triad of nuclear forces Pakistan seeks a triad of peace, security and progress. To this end we suggest, first, the resumption of high-level talks between India and Pakistan to discuss and resolve the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, which is the core issue between the two countries as well as other outstanding disputes and

differences; second, a Strategic Restraint Regime, involving measures for nuclear restraint and conventional balance; and, third, high-level interaction for the promotion of trade, transit arrangements, development cooperation and investment generation.

In this forum, I will dwell only on the strategic restraint regime as we visualize it.

Prior to India's 1998 nuclear tests, Pakistan was prepared to live with so-called "existential deterrence". In our now nuclearized region, Pakistan believes it would be best to preserve mutual deterrence at the lowest possible level. Pakistan will not enter an arms race with India. If, however, India continues to move up the nuclear ladder, Pakistan may be compelled to take the steps necessary to preserve the credibility of its deterrence. We are prepared to discuss, in fairly specific terms, our requirements for a minimum credible nuclear deterrence, if India is prepared to do so. Yet if the well publicized Indian nuclear doctrine is any indication of the future direction of India's nuclear programme and ambitions, it should be a matter of deep concern for the international community, as it is for us. New Delhi has claimed that the nuclear doctrine is a non-official document. Yet India has not disavowed the ambitious goals and plans for a triad of land, air and sea-based delivery systems, which could entail the acquisition of several hundred nuclear weapons.

Pakistan is prepared for reciprocal agreements with India for nuclear and missile restraint. These could include agreements, first, not to deploy ballistic missiles; second, not operationally to weaponize nuclear capable missile systems; third, to formalize the understanding that prior and adequate notification should be provided of flight-tests of missiles; and, fourth, to declare a moratorium on the development, acquisition or deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems, since these can destabilize what is known as minimum credible deterrence.

Such measures of nuclear restraint will be much more effective in preventing the possible use of nuclear weapons than a mere declaration of no-first use, which has been used by our neighbour as a justification for acquiring a larger nuclear arsenal on the basis of the argument that this would be needed to develop a second-strike capability.

Nuclear restraint agreements between India and Pakistan could be accompanied by political and technical confidence-building measures. Bilateral arrangements can be envisaged for the credibility and confirmation of mutual nuclear restraint measures, including through agreed monitoring mechanisms. Such arrangements should also include enhancing the effectiveness of the command and control systems by each country. The two countries could establish round-the-clock communications between designated authorities with a view to ensuring crisis stability and management and precluding any misunderstandings regarding strategic assets.

Mutual nuclear restraint between India and Pakistan will have to be built on a balance in the conventional forces and the capabilities of the two countries. An imbalance in conventional capabilities will obviously be destabilizing. The 28 per cent increase in India's defence budget in 2000 is by itself equal to the entire defence budget of Pakistan. India seeks to justify its huge defence outlays by pointing to its long borders. The fact remains, however, that almost all

(Mr. Haque, Pakistan)

India's military assets are deployed against Pakistan. If India continues its conventional arms build-up, Pakistan will be compelled to recalibrate its defence planning in order effectively to reduce the heightened threat of conventional conflict.

India's conventional arms build-up will not promote the preservation of peace in south Asia and the Indian Ocean. It could well threaten it. An ambitious nuclear programme coupled with a massive conventional arms build-up will only point to a policy of seeking regional hegemony, which will provoke concern and reaction throughout the region.

Conventional arms control is, therefore, essential to preserve the stability of nuclear deterrence in south Asia and to reduce wasteful defence expenditures. Pakistan has made specific proposals to promote these objectives, including a mutually agreed ratio of forces between India and Pakistan, measures to increase mutual confidence and elimination of the threat of surprise attack and pre-emptive strikes by either country. These proposals, and others that seek to promote regional stability, should be considered by India and Pakistan in bilateral talks and in multilateral mechanisms that should be created to elaborate the new security architecture for south Asia.

Mr. President, the three pillars of south Asian peace, security and progress, which I mentioned earlier, namely: a high-level dialogue to resolve Jammu and Kashmir and other outstanding disputes, a mechanism to promote trade and economic cooperation, and a strategic restraint regime, would complement, sustain, support and reinforce one another.

Through sincere and persistent efforts, we can, indeed, we must, create the conditions for durable peace and enhanced prosperity for the thirteen hundred million people of south Asia.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you, Foreign Secretary Haque, for that thoughtful and important statement and for the kind words that you have addressed to me, and I turn now to the distinguished representative of our new participant, Latvia. Counsellor Jansons, you have the floor.

Mr. JANSONS (Latvia): On behalf of the delegation of Latvia, and since this is the first time that my delegation has participated in this important forum, I wish to express our appreciation of the decision to grant observer status to the Latvian delegation to the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, Latvia shares the concerns and expectations of the international community with regard to international peace and stability. We are ready to assume our part of responsibility in this endeavour. Latvia views the Conference on Disarmament as the world's principal multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and a vital mechanism for moving forward the multilateral arms control and disarmament agenda.

Despite certain difficulties during the last years, the Conference can be proud of many outstanding achievements in the past. Allow me to single out among these the major multilateral arms limitation and disarmament agreements which have been negotiated by the Conference and to which Latvia is a State party, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

(Mr. Jansons, Latvia)

Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Latvia has signed and is planning this year to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. Latvia also actively participates in the review conferences of the existing multilateral arms control and disarmament instruments. This demonstrates Latvia's commitment to contributing to the global implementation of the aforementioned agreements and promoting the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to express the hope that, during this session, the Conference will make a decisive breakthrough in the stalemate that has persisted in the last years and to assure you of the active participation of the Latvian delegation in the work of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: This concludes my list of speakers for today. India would like to take the floor. Ambassador Sood, you have the floor.

Mr. SOOD (India): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time during this session under your presidency, may I take this opportunity to convey our pleasure at seeing you in the chair. We know that you bring to this responsibility a vast experience and dedication, and I would also like to assure you of our fullest cooperation in discharging the responsibilities at this particular juncture. I have asked for the floor with some reluctance as it is the first time I take the floor during the session, but I felt compelled to do so in order to bring out certain facts which I felt had not perhaps been adequately brought out in the statement made by the distinguished Foreign Secretary of Pakistan.

The first point that I should like to make is that India has been and remains the initiator of dialogue with Pakistan. In fact, the Simla Agreement and the composite dialogue process, which was agreed to a few years ago, commit both countries to dialogue, and I had the privilege of being part of the initiation of the composite dialogue process. It was in that context that in 1999 the Indian Prime Minister took the bold initiative of the bus journey from Delhi to Lahore, which led to the signing of the Lahore Declaration, with which, I am sure, members of this Conference are familiar, as well as the eight-point memorandum of understanding between the then foreign secretaries. Once again, I had the privilege of being part of the advance team which negotiated both the memorandum of understanding and the Lahore Declaration. It was unfortunate that the bus to Lahore got hijacked to Kargil.

I think it is important to accept one basic fact: that dialogue requires the building up of trust, and trust is not built by engaging in dialogue in winter and committing aggression in spring. It is not built by sponsoring terrorism across borders. More fundamentally, it is not built by seeking to change the status quo through military means, overt or covert.

In India, we realize one basic fact: that we have to accept geography as it is. We are a neighbour of Pakistan, and we are also fully aware of many of the problems that violence has created in the society of Pakistan. The implications of this violence are not lost on India: the

(Mr. Sood, India)

fact that today in Pakistan an AK47 is cheaper than a sack of flour, the fact that there may be more than 8 or 9 million Kalashnikovs unlicensed in Pakistan or that the number of "madrasahs" in the last 25 years has increased from 900 to more than 12,000.

These are figures that cause us concern, and it is for this reason that, while we accept that many of these have implications for us, we have not closed the door on dialogue with Pakistan. We have said, however, that Pakistan needs to demonstrate its commitment to dialogue more effectively - more meaningfully - than it has done in the past. We remain committed to bringing peace in the region. The announcement made by the Prime Minister of India in November - that the Indian security forces would not initiate combat operations against terrorists during the holy month of Ramadan - was made precisely with a view to creating such an environment to promote dialogue. That particular directive has been renewed twice, once at the end of December and the last time on 23 January. This is in an attempt to bring about the necessary conditions for some element of dialogue to be resumed.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that the ceasefire has been extended twice, acts of terrorism and violence continue. We are conscious that there has been a de-escalation on the line of control, as was pointed out by the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan. Yet we need more positive signs, and the promotion, encouragement and abetting of cross-border terrorism has to cease if conditions for dialogue are to be created. While announcing the extension of the ceasefire on 23 January, the External Affairs Minister of India pointed out that such acts "must cease, and activities of terrorist organizations curbed and controlled by Pakistan in order to create a suitable environment for resumption of the composite dialogue process between the two countries".

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Sood, and thank you for the kind words that you have addressed to the chair. Are there other speakers who wish to take the floor? I see the representative of Pakistan. Ambassador Akram, you have the floor.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity, once again, on my own behalf, to extend my congratulations to you on the assumption of the presidency for the Conference at this critical juncture in our work, and I am sure that we will be infected by your enthusiasm and your optimism, and perhaps we may even surprise ourselves by succeeding in the adoption of a work programme this year. I continue to be hopeful, and we shall try to be as helpful as possible in realizing this objective. I would like also, Mr. President, to extend a warm welcome to all my new colleagues, colleagues from Indonesia, from Sri Lanka, and not the least, my distinguished colleague from India, who is an old and dear friend of mine. It is therefore all the more unfortunate that I am obliged to take the floor at this time to respond and qualify some of the points which have been raised in the statement which he just made in response to the statement of our Foreign Secretary.

Mr. President, dialogue between two countries is not a favour that either bestows upon the other. Dialogue is a process which is in the mutual interest of the parties concerned and, certainly, if India wishes peace with Pakistan, it will need to talk to Pakistan, regardless of its value-judgements. We, too, have our value-judgements, and the bus of peace has been hijacked

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

quite often from New Delhi to various places: in 1971, in 1985 when Siachen was occupied and remains occupied by Indian troops, again, on two other occasions when Indian incursions took place along the line of control and have not been vacated.

So I think we can all refer back in our memory banks and raise reasons why we should not be talking to each other. But the fact of the matter is that there is a hot conflict going on in Kashmir between Indian forces and the Kashmiri people, and yes, the people of Pakistan sympathize and support - politically and diplomatically - the just struggle of the Kashmiri for self-determination, and we will continue to do so.

That conflict in Kashmir can be halted very easily, if India withdraws its 700,000-strong army of occupation in Kashmir. The violence in Kashmir arises from the repression of the Kashmiri people. You cannot suppress people, kill their sons and daughters, rape their wives and then say that they are resorting to terrorism. They have every right to fight back in self-defence for their freedom, and that is what they are doing. It is a just struggle, and Pakistan cannot be accused of committing any act of subterfuge by voicing its support for this just struggle of the Kashmiri people.

My colleague has spoken about the ceasefire declared by the Indian Government. According to our reports, this is more of a declaration rather than a ceasefire, because the cordon on the approaches to Srinagar and other towns of occupied Kashmir remains, and reports received only yesterday attest to several such cordons and operations in which innocent Kashmiris have been rounded up and put in jail, and several have died over the past week. So where is this ceasefire, and where is this restraint that was declared in the holy month of Ramadan? For the Muslims of Kashmir, every month is a holy month, but they continue to be oppressed every day, every week and every month.

My distinguished colleague has spoken about the concerns regarding Pakistani society in India. I thank him for that concern, but let me also tell him that we too are deeply concerned about what is happening in the society in India. We are concerned that there are 17 insurgencies taking place across the length and breadth of India, which the Indian army is engaged in suppressing through violent means, and that violence has a consequence, not only on Pakistan, but on every other neighbour of India.

And yes, we too are concerned about the rise of fundamentalism in India, where the party in power is sponsored by a fascist group called the VHP, of which it is an offshoot, a group which was responsible for the destruction of the Babri Mosque, for the killing of over 3,000 Muslims all across India, and whose leaders have likened themselves to the fascists and are great admirers of Hitler, and yet still remain on the loose and are even calling the shots for the Indian Government. There is a concern about fundamentalism and extremism, but in New Delhi fundamentalism holds the reins of power. So yes, we in Pakistan, too, are concerned about the direction of Indian society, especially if these extremist parties go ahead with the construction of the Hindu temple on the site of the destroyed Babri Mosque. If that happens, there will be flames. What happened in Bosnia will look like a picnic by comparison.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

But if there are concerns in India about Pakistan and concerns in Pakistan about India, is it not best that the two countries should be talking to each other? We think so. The world thinks so. But India continues to impede, and impose preconditions for, the resumption of such a dialogue. We urge India to reconsider. We urge it to take the part of rationality and not lapse into irrationality and arrogance.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you, Ambassador Akram, for your statement and for the kind words that you addressed to the chair. Are there others who wish to take the floor at this stage?

I would like then to invite you to take a decision on the requests of four States - Ghana, Madagascar, Panama and the Republic of Moldova - to participate as observers in the work of the Conference during this session, without first having considered them in an informal plenary. I note these requests in CD/WP.515, which is before you.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Ghana, Madagascar, Panama and the Republic of Moldova to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure?

It is so decided.

Unless there are other speakers who wish to take the floor, our business will be concluded with just one mention that I wish to make concerning the status of the meeting next Tuesday. In my opening remarks to the plenary earlier this week and in some gatherings since and in terms and with a tone that I think some delegations may have found unduly peremptory - for which I apologize - I urged all delegations to put the Conference to immediate good use, despite the fact that we lack an agreed work programme. I particularly expressed my concern that the speakers' lists for our plenaries were very short: that remains the situation. There is no speaker at this point for our meeting on Tuesday. As you will, I think, have heard, at yesterday's presidential consultations, I asked group coordinators to encourage delegations to inscribe their names on the lists of speakers. I believe that general exchange of views - a common feature, after all, of all conferences - would be helpful in creating necessary momentum, and I believe that it might facilitate agreement on a programme of work.

Regardless, I will decide on Monday, at noon, whether or not we should go ahead with Tuesday's plenary. Certainly we will go ahead with next Thursday's plenary, but as to Tuesday's, I will decide midday Monday. I have therefore asked the group coordinators to communicate with me on Monday morning, and I want to encourage you to communicate accordingly with them before then.

Unless there are others wishing to take the floor, that would conclude our business. Seeing none, I declare the 863rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament closed.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.